

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, BE
SUBJECT: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE RESUMES

REF: BRUSSELS 11549

1. PURSUANT TO A GOVERNMENT PROMISE TO RESUME THE
REGIONALIZATION DIALOGUE AFTER THE COMMUNAL ELECTIONS,
34 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FLEMISH AND FRANCOPHONE
COMMUNITIES MET FOR THREE HOURS NOVEMBER 30 IN THE PRESENCE
OF GOVERNMENT'S TWO MINISTERS FOR INSTITUTIONAL REFORM,
MESSRS. PERIM (FRANCOPHONE) AND VANDERKERKHOVE (FLEMISH).
THE MEETING TOOK PLACE UNDER THE JOINT PRESIDENCY OF DE KEERSMAEKER
(CVP) AND HUREZ (PSB), TWO OF THE 34-MEMBER GROUP
DRAWN FROM THE VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES, AS
FOLLOWS: CVP4; PSC 4; PSB 4; BSP 4; PVV 4; PRLW 3;
PL 1; VU 4; FDF 2; RW 2; PC 1; KP 1.
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2. THE NOVEMBER 30 MEETING WAS A "SERENE" PRELIMINARY SESSION WHICH SET THE OBJECTIVE - "A GLOBAL INTERCOMMUNITY ACCORD ON THE REFORM OF INSTITUTIONS," AN ACCORD BINDING THOSE SIGNING IT TO WORK FOR ITS ENACTMENT INTO LAW. APART FROM STATEMENTS BY REPRESENTATIVES CLARIFYING THE POSITIONS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE PARTIES, LITTLE OF REAL SUBSTANCE WAS TACKLED. AT THE NEXT MEETING - SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 7 - THE TWO CO-PRESIDENTS WILL PROPOSE AN AGENDA.

3. COMMENT: SEPARATE REPRESENTATION FOR THE FDF (PREVIOUSLY GROUPED WITH THE RW) SATISFIED A BASIC FDF DEMAND, AND RECOGNIZED THE STRONG FDF SHOWING IN THE RECENT COMMUNAL ELECTIONS. THE ADOPTION OF AN AGENDA WILL, ITSELF, BE A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE. FRANCOPHONE REPRESENTATIVES WILL URGE PRIORITY CONSIDERATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 107 (D) OF THE 1970 CONSTITUTION (3 REGIONS: FLANDERS, WALLONIA, BRUSSELS). THEIR FEAR IS THAT A CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION OF THE KIND NECESSARY TO EFFECT THE ENVISIONED STRUCTURAL REFORM COULD JEOPARDIZE THE STILL-UNIMPLEMENTED 3- REGION CONCEPT. A SEPARATE BUT RELATED QUESTION IS WHETHER THE TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT CAN SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH (THE COMMUNITY DIALOGUE IS LIKELY TO BE PROTECTED) TO ALLOW THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT, ACTING ON THE RESULTS OF THAT DIALOGUE, TO PREPARE THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION WHICH CAN ONLY BE VOTED BY THE FOLLOWING PARLIAMENT. SOME OBSERVERS ARE OF THE OPINION THAT THE MINISTERIAL RESHUFFLE WHICH NOW APPEARS NECESSARY AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT SPLIT IN THE WALLOON RALLY (REFTEL) MAY NOT BE ENOUGH TO HOLD THE PRESENT MAJORITY INTACT. THUS, WITH THE POSSIBLE PRESPECT OF ELECTIONS IN THE NEAR OFFING, PARTY REPRESENTATIVES TO THE COMMUNITY DIALOGUE WILL NOT WISH TO BE SEEN TO BE TOO CONCILIATORY. FOR THIS REASON, SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN THE TALKS MAY HAVE TO AWAIT RE-ASSURANCE CONCERNING THE GOVERNMENT'S LIFE-EXPECTANCY. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE TALKS THEMSELVES SERVE AS A PROP FOR GOVERNMENT - NO PARTY WISHING TO TAKE ON THE ONUS OF BRINGING DOWN A GOVERNMENT MARCHING (HOWEVER SLOWLY) TOWARDS A SETTLEMENT OF THE THORNY COMMUNITY PROBLEM.FIRESTONE

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